THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRl M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. No decision has been taken by the Planning Commission, at present, to review the current method of poverty estimation. However, the Planning Commission has constituted an Expert Group in December, 2005 under the Chairmanship of Professor Suresh D. Tendulkar to review the methodology for estimation of poverty. The Expert Group has not yet submitted its report.

Annual Plan for Uttarakhand

†2555. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of increase recommended/approved in the annual plan of Uttarakhand State during the year 2006-07 in comparison to the last year and the percentage of increase recommended/approved by the Planning Commission in the annual plan of the year 2007-08 in comparison to the last year; and

(b) the reasons for low increase in the annual plan of the present planning year as compared to the last year's plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) and (b) The percentage increase in the Annual Plan approved by Planning Commission for the year 2006-07 in comparison to the previous year was 48.15% and in the Annual Plan 2007-08 it was 9.47%. The agreed plan size is finalized in consultation with the State Government on the basis of resource projection by the State, availability of the resources and overall debt ceiling of the State.

Declaration of backward districts

2556. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of districts in the country declared by Government as backward districts as on date;

(b) whether Government have formulated any national policy in this respect; and

(c) if so, the details thereof indicating the number of poor families residing in these districts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) The list of 250 districts identified for coverage under the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF), set up in 2006-07, is enclosed as Statement (*See* below).

(b) No, Sir. However, as stated in reply to part (a) of the question above, the Government set up the Backward Regions Grant Fund in 2006-07 to redress regional imbalances in development. The fund will provide financial resources for supplementing and converging existing developmental inflows into the identified districts through Panchayati Raj Institutions.

(c) Does not arise.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.